

the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2,

the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 in which the 8 c-terminal residues thereof are substituted by the 6 residues VRCVTL of SEQ ID NO: 11,

the soluble amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO: 2 from residue 1 to 343, and

the soluble amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 from residue 1 to 337.

45. (New) A polypeptide according to claim 44 comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

46. (New) A polypeptide according to claim 44 comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 in which the 8 c-terminal residues are substituted by the 6 residues VRCVTL of SEQ ID NO: 11.

47. (New) A polypeptide in soluble form according to claim 44 comprising an amino acid sequence selected from the group consisting of:

the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 from residue 1 to 343, and

the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2 from residue 1 to 337.

48. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising, as active ingredient, a polypeptide according to claim 44.

49. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising, as active ingredient, a polypeptide according to claim 45.

50. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising, as active ingredient, a polypeptide according to claim 46.

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51. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising, as active ingredient, a polypeptide according to claim 47.

52. (New) A screening method for identifying agonists or antagonists of IL-13 for its IL-13 $\beta$  receptor which comprises contacting a test compound with a polypeptide according to claim 44 and measuring the affinity of the compound for the polypeptide.

53. (New) A screening method for identifying agonists or antagonists of IL-13 for its IL-13 $\beta$  receptor which comprises contacting a test compound with a polypeptide according to claim 45 and measuring the affinity of the compound for the polypeptide.

54. (New) A screening method for identifying agonists or antagonists of IL-13 for its IL-13 $\beta$  receptor which comprises contacting a test compound with a polypeptide according to claim 46 and measuring the affinity of the compound for the polypeptide.

55. (New) A screening method for identifying agonists or antagonists of IL-13 for its IL-13 $\beta$  receptor which comprises contacting a test compound with a polypeptide according to claim 47 and measuring the affinity of the compound for the polypeptide.

56. (New) A method for the treatment of conditions linked to immunological or inflammatory reactions mediated by IL-13 comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a composition according to claim 48.

57. (New) A method for the treatment of conditions linked to immunological or inflammatory reactions mediated by IL-13 comprising administering to a patient in need

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of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a composition according to claim 49.

58. (New) A method for the treatment of conditions linked to immunological or inflammatory reactions mediated by IL-13 comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a composition according to claim 50.

59. (New) A method for the treatment of conditions linked to immunological or inflammatory reactions mediated by IL-13 comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a composition according to claim

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